

along the road. It seemed bigger than a striped-necked mongoose (*Herpestes vitticollis*) and was considerably larger than both the small Indian Civet (*Viverricula indica*) and common Palm Civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*). Standing clear off the ground, it had a greyish indistinctly patterned coat and a black banded tail with a severe injury at mid-length, which I noticed from a distance of about 10 metres. It was not disturbed by the approaching truck, until a worker on the rear deck flung a piece of wood at it! It snarled before bolting into the bush. I was able to identify it with reasonable certainty as the elusive Malabar Civet (*Viverra megaspila*). Subsequently, I had an opportunity to examine a skin in the BNHS collection.

Malabar Civet, like many other western ghat rain-forest species, has a discontinuous distribution reappearing again only in South-east Asia. The Indian subspecies is *civettina* Blyth. (Prater 1971). Jerdon (1874) describ-

ed its range as the westcoast-Western Ghats complex extending from Cape Comorin northwards to 'Honore' (Honnavar, Uttara Kan-nada dist., Karnataka at about 15°N. lat.) and possibly beyond. He reported its occurrence in the vicinity of villages as well as in densely forested ghat regions. My sighting is within this range.

Due to paucity of recent information, this subspecies is listed as an endangered species by IUCN. A greeting card produced by World Wildlife Fund-India erroneously restricts its distribution to 'Coastal districts of Kerala' and fears that it may be extinct. In my opinion, civets like *V. megaspila* with large distributional range, adaptability to diverse habitat types possibly coupled to versatile foraging strategies, are unlikely candidates for extinction, in the absence of selective hunting pressure. The sighting reported above perhaps supports this view.

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### 3. NOTE ON THE BREEDING OF INDIAN WOLF *CANIS LUPUS PALLIPES* AT THE NATIONAL ZOOLOGICAL PARK, NEW DELHI

Little is known about the reproductive biology and postnatal care of the Indian wolf. This note is based on the data available in the National Zoological Park from November, 1981 to March, 1985 during which period the park could successfully breed the Indian wolf.

The Park obtained two male wolves from Jaipur Zoo on 25th November, 1981. They were released in an open enclosure of approximately 100 metres x 30 metres size with a common corridor interconnecting the cells at the back of the enclosure for locking the

animals when necessary. The floor of the enclosure has a thick growth of grass interspersed with shady trees. The two males were released in this enclosure and were fed on 3kg of buffalo meat per day per animal except on Fridays. They were subsequently joined by a female received from the Indore Zoo on 28.10.1982 which eventually died on 16.12.1982. On 19.4.1983 one of the two males was returned to the Jaipur Zoo and a female was obtained on breeding loan on 24.3.1984 from the Mysore Zoo. They were seen to mate for three days on 10.12.1984, 11.12.1984 and 12.12.1984 and each mating lasted for about 14 minutes, 12 minutes and 10 minutes respectively. The female during the advance stages of pregnancy completely disappeared into a burrow dug up earlier by her. This burrow which had a single opening to begin with was supplemented with two more openings leading into a central chamber. The male was

removed earlier from the enclosure and kept in a cell separately. The female did not take meat given to her on 13.2.1985 and 14.2.1985, therefore it is presumed that she littered on 13.12.1985 after a gestation period of 63 days. The whelps were first sighted on 9.3.1985 when 4 cubs were seen. On 10.3.1985 5 cubs were seen. They still spent most of their time in the burrow and came out only for a short period in the morning and evening, the diet of the female consists of 3 kg. of buffalo calf meat,  $\frac{1}{2}$  litre milk and one rabbit once a week.

Our data agrees with Prater's observation of wolf pups being produced in the spring or early summer in Himalayas unlike the main breeding season of wolves in India at the end of the monsoon and the cubs being born in December. The litter size of 5 cubs is within the usual reported range of three to nine in a litter.

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#### 4. OBSERVATIONS ON THE RED FOX (*VULPES VULPES ARABICA*) IN THE AL AIN AREA, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

##### INTRODUCTION

There is much Red Fox activity throughout the United Arab Emirates. They inhabit rocky mountainous regions or well watered urban and suburban areas. They appear, however, to be absent from the open sand dunes. There have been no previous studies of the parasites of this species in this country. Since December 1979 Red Foxes have been snared and shot in the zoo as a disease control policy. They

have also been responsible for a number of deaths of new-born mammals and waterfowl in the zoological collection. Fourteen of these foxes were autopsied, and the gastro-intestinal contents of thirteen were examined to establish as far as possible the diet, and estimate the potential danger to the zoo animals of incoming parasites carried by the foxes. The weights of some animals were noted, in order to compare with captive Red Foxes in the zoological collection.